

SUNY Cobleskill College Council
Wednesday, April 1, 2026

College Council Members in Attendance: Eric Stein, Anna Blinn Cole, Linda Cross, Erik Hage, Theresa Heary, Martin Messner, Susan Rightmyer, Daniil Usmanov, Marilyn Wyman

College Council Guests:

Cabinet Members - Marion Terenzio, Derwin Bennett, Nick DeCaprio, Laura Gross, Anne Hopkins-Gross, Scott Ferguson, Gus McGiver, Darcy Medica, Anna Miarka-Grzelak, Jason Politi, Cynthia Zinzow

Eric Stein called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Martin motioned to approve the minutes from February 24, 2026 meeting, and the motion passed.

Part I Information Sharing with On-Campus Contingencies

Student Government Update – *Daniil Usmanov, SGA President*

- Event activity is up significantly: Total events increased from 2,300 last year to 2,700 this year, with more organizations hosting events (from 60 to 72) and about a 10% increase in events tracking attendance. Recent highlights include a K-pop with the police event (70 attendees) and a charity volleyball tournament benefiting the campus food pantry.
- Elections are complete with a new full executive board in place and beginning training. Daniil and the new SGA president, Lee, will attend SUNY SA April 10–13 to advocate on issues like the activities fee and bring information back to campus.
- Daniil highlighted strong, proactive support from the Wellness Center, RAs, and staff, noting that during crises like the recent power outage and high-stress periods like midterms, students felt safe, could often access counseling within an hour, and experienced prompt follow-up and effective outreach

President's Update – *Marion Terenzio, President*

- Capital Region Higher Ed Alliance: The president is co-chairing a 17-institution Capital Region Higher Ed Alliance, recently launched with strong media attention. The alliance's goal is to raise college attainment in the region (currently 45% vs. a 75% target) through collaboration rather than competition.
- SUNY reconnect: The state's one-house bill includes expanding SUNY Reconnect to now include institutions like this campus, supporting free enrollment in high-demand fields for qualifying students.

- There is also a surge of student complaints/claims seeking financial aid refunds after dropping out; this is a nationwide trend, not specific to this campus.
- Farm Summit and SUNY Agritech positioning: The college has completed Farm Summit recommendations focused on the campus farm as a critical, expensive lab. The president is actively positioning the farm as an R1-style research lab and emphasizing that 100% of students use the campus as a lab in some way.
- Strategic role as a regional, applied-learning institution: The president stressed that the college is reframing itself as a regional anchor institution with obligations beyond workforce pipelines: supporting economic, social, and community wellbeing. This includes expanding applied learning and applied research, building external partnerships, and ensuring liberal arts/ human skills (critical thinking, communication, civic engagement) remain central to degree programs, even as workforce and AI pressures grow.

AcMo Plan (Academic Momentum Plan) Update- *Darcy Medica, Provost / VP Academic Affairs*

- The Academic Momentum is being implemented through a campus plan aimed at improving how successfully students move through their academic journeys, using data-informed, nationally validated practices.
- Three main working groups:
 - Gateway Courses (Math & English): Developing a community of practice for faculty to share best practices and creating a Writing Center to better support students in high-challenge, high-impact courses.
 - Advising: Reviewing how advisement is done and how to use DegreeWorks more effectively, supported by an external program review by NACADA, the national advising association.
 - Summer Bridge: Designing a Summer Bridge program to bring some students in early, especially those lacking key prerequisites or skills out of high school, so they are better prepared to succeed from day one.
- The campus has received \$20,000 in funding to support implementation of the overall plan, including the advising initiative.

Enrollment Update – *Anna Miarka-Grzelak, VP Strategic Enrollment and Innovation*

- Applications are up 13.5%, acceptances up 15.5%, and deposits up 17.4% compared to both last year and the year before. Growth is currently driven mainly by freshmen, with transfer numbers only 1.5% up, which is typical since transfers decide later.
- The fastest-growing area in deposits is Animal Science (B.S.), reinforcing the need for supports like the Summer Bridge Program to help incoming students start strong. Communications degrees currently have the lowest numbers, while many other programs show modest increases.

Budget Update – *Laura Gross, VP for Finance and Operations*

- The campus is developing the FY 2026–2027 budget, which must remain flat overall, with internal reallocations needed mainly due to rising utility costs (electricity projected to increase by about 25%).
- The structural deficit has been reduced from \$3.1M last year to under \$600K as of February 28, though it is expected to end the year around \$700K–\$800K and approximately \$1M next year, driven largely by utilities.
- Despite these pressures, the campus remains on track to achieve a positive fiscal position by FY 2027–2028, in accordance with the Chancellor’s stability mandate.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Update – *President Terenzio*

- SUNY’s annual student diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging survey is currently open, with results to be used to inform system-wide and campus-level planning.
- Recently received employee belonging survey data is under review and will be shared with the campus community as part of a structured process to inform ongoing institutional initiatives.
- The College has received a complaint through the Office for Civil Rights related to scholarship language. The matter is under review.

Student Engagement – *Anne Hopkins Gross, VP for Student Development*

- A new counselor is joining in the coming weeks, with mindfulness initiatives formally embedded into the position, alongside ongoing student leadership trainings, workshops, and increased integration of well-being content into courses.
- The Student Well-Being and Engagement Committee has begun meeting and is addressing topics such as freedom of speech and clearer guidance for prospective students with medical and/or mental health needs (e.g., expectations and local hospital access).
- The Campus Community Coalition has been reinvigorated, bringing together local government, police, fire, codes, and campus representatives to collaboratively address student-related issues in the community, including resolving prior neighborhood problems.
- Partnerships with the local village and businesses are expanding, including events and initiatives that draw students into the community, offer local business deals, support community service, and involve the College heavily in local festivals and celebrations.
- The Wellness Center recently underwent a rigorous accreditation visit during a campus power outage, which was successfully managed with broad campus support.
- The College is in the awards season, with a record 49 applicants for Excellence in Student Leadership (ESLA) awards, multiple specialty awards, and a strong interest in serving as senior speaker, reflecting high levels of student engagement and leadership.
- A cross-campus group is exploring how to better support incoming and at-risk students from deposit through arrival, including adding a survey question so students and families can indicate a need for extra help, aligning with a holistic, wraparound support model.

Facilities Master Plan – *Laura Gross, Vice President for Finance and Operations*

- As part of Phase 4 of the Facilities Master Plan, consultants presented three campus framework concepts and are soliciting feedback from campus stakeholders, including cabinet members and students, to inform priorities related to safety, circulation, and modernization.
- The Facilities Master Plan is being developed as a 10-year strategic guide to support future engagement with the SUNY Construction Fund regarding capital investment and facility use.
- In alignment with SUNY Construction Fund space utilization guidelines, the College’s facilities strategy is focused on the modernization and repurposing of existing facilities. Within these parameters, the redevelopment of the athletic fields, including the addition of a turf field, has been identified as the primary capital initiative.

External Partnerships – *Various Presenters*

- The College’s emerging collaboration with Fordham includes input on Fordham’s facilities design (e.g., rooftop greenhouse and growing space), shared use of a 250-person meeting space in the Bronx, and joint grant proposals, with one recent submission potentially bringing \$1.5–\$1.6 million to the College.
- Through the SPARK partnership (with the IDA, County Tourism, Ag specialist, and Economic Development Coordinator), the College is co-hosting the “Igniting Prosperity” event on May 7 at Cobleskill High School to highlight case studies in county economic development.
- The College is organizing its second business plan competition on April 24, expecting about 20 businesses to compete for \$32,000 in awards to support business growth.
- The Empire State Entrepreneur Expo will be held on May 1 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Upper Prentice, showcasing local entrepreneurs and providing opportunities for sales and community engagement.
- Expansion of the training center will support increased enrollment in agriculture, engineering, heavy equipment, and micro-credential programs, with an anticipated net revenue of about \$1.5 million in two to three years and strong, ongoing external demand from state agencies and private companies.
- The College’s applied expertise is attracting external partners, illustrated by a Canadian firm that brought a problematic vehicle for diagnosis and repair; College faculty and students resolved the issue within 24 hours.

Faculty Governance Update – *Erik Hage – Presiding Officer of the Faculty*

- A campus-wide governance meeting was held with strong attendance, reflecting heightened engagement of faculty and staff in shared governance during a critical period.
- An Administrative Conference on faculty and staff well-being, convened by the President, is being launched to review data, research best practices, and recommend changes to improve the work environment.
- Governance bodies approved several academic policy updates, including aligning transfer policies with SUNY Central, consolidating special project policies (individual faculty–

student credit work), and beginning work on clarifying and standardizing instructional modality definitions for students.

- The combined Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning (FASP) committee has broadened guidelines for strategic initiative funding to include projects that affect revenue indirectly and has supported extensive professional development tied to classroom impact and certifications.

Advancement, Foundation, and Alumni Updates – *Nick DeCaprio -Interim Chief Development Officer*

- The College is outperforming many larger comprehensives, with \$3.325M raised last year, placing it ahead of four comprehensives and close to Farmingdale despite a much smaller student body and a four-person advancement team.
- Fundraising has grown from about \$1.2M in 2020–21 to \$3.325M, with especially strong results in corporate and foundation support; current year-to-date totals are approximately \$2.2M toward a \$3.25–\$4M goal, with a robust pipeline.
- The College will hold its first Athletics Day of Giving on April 10–11, directing funds to team needs and leveraging multiple corporate and individual matching challenges.
- A new Athletics corporate partners program has been launched to engage companies in supporting athletics while gaining exposure to student-athletes; several partners have already been secured.

Part II – Council Reports, Discussion and/or Actions

- The Council approved the appointment of five external members to the Canine Advisory Committee,
- Council members noted positive experiences with campus-operated enterprises (e.g., the Rolling Bistro), recognizing them as valuable educational labs that also enhance the College’s public image.
- The Council determined that an executive session was not needed, and the next meeting was scheduled for May 6, the final meeting of the spring semester.
- The College announced its honorary degree recipient, author Jan Brett, underscoring the institution’s commitment to the liberal arts and its historical roots.

Eric made a motion to end the meeting, and the meeting ended at 9:51.